Some Short and Plain

DIRECTIONS

For the Spending of

One Day Well:

By which (if every Day carefully obſerved) a Man may be much enabled (thro' GOD's Grace) to ſpend his whole Life well.

By the Author of, *The Anſwer to all Excuſes and Pretences for not coming to the* Holy Communion.

Pray without ceaſing, 1 Theſſ. v. 17. *Keep thy Heart with all Diligence, for out of it are the Iſſues of Life*, Prov. iv. 23.

HAving, over Night, reſolved to ſpend the next Day as an honeſt Man, and as a good Chriſtian ought to do, a little before you betake yourſelf to your Reſt, ſay the following ſhort Prayer; not haſtily and confuſedly (as the Cuſtom is with many when they addreſs themſelves to God) but carefully, and with all the Deliberation that may be.

O Lord God, make me, I beſeech thee, truly penitent for all my Sins paſt; careful and watchful againſt them for the Time to come, and unfeignedly thankful for all the Mercies and Bleſſings which thou haſt vouchſafed unto me the whole Courſe of my Life. Pardon whatever I have done amiſs, for the ſake of Chriſt Jeſus, who died for me; and give me the Grace and Aſſiſtance of thy Holy Spirit, that I may be enabled to ſpend the whole remainder of my Life in a true and faithful Obedience to thy Laws. At this Time particularly I beſeech thee, O Lord, to grant me ſuch Reſt and Refreſhment this Night, as may help to fit and prepare me to ſpend the enſuing Day, as I have reſolved, in thy Fear and Service. All which I beg of thine infinite Mercy, for the ſake of Jeſus Chriſt our bleſſed Lord and Saviour. Amen.

And then, as you are undreſſing yourſelf, going into your Bed, and ſettling to Sleep, think with yourſelf, that as you now put off your Cloaths, and lay yourſelf down in your Bed to reſt; ſo within a few Days, the Time ſhall certainly

ly come, when your Body ſhall be wrap'd in a Winding-Sheet, and laid in the Grave: Upon which occaſion, ſay after this, or the like manner: *Good God, give me thy Grace, I beſeech thee, that I may be ever mindful of my Death, and always prepared for it. And whenever my Soul ſhall depart from my Body, O receive it into its Bliſs and Happineſs. And as I hope thro' thy Mercy, that when this Night is ended, I ſhall riſe from my Bed in Health to do thee Service; ſo grant, that at the laſt Day, my Body may be raiſed from the Grave, and re-united to my Soul, that I may dwell with thee, and praiſe thee to all Eternity, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.* Amen.

2. As often as you ſhall happen to awake in the Night, call God into your Thoughts, and lift up your Heart to him in ſome ſhort Ejaculation: As, *Lord bleſs and protect me the remainder of this Night, and for evermore. O thou, who never ſleepeſt, watch over me, who am unable without thee to help my ſelf.* And then compoſe yourſelf quietly to ſleep again.

3. When the Morning comes, ſuffer not the World, nor any Things which belongs to it, to take Poſſeſſion of your Thoughts, until you have dedicated yourſelf unto Almighty God: Which do in theſe, or the like Words, as ſoon as you are well awake: *O God, I thank thee, that thou haſt not ſhut me up this Night in perpetual Darkneſs, but haſt of thy Goodneſs added one Day more to my Life. O grant, that I may ſo employ both this, and all the reſt of my Days in thy Service, that in the end, I may be a Partaker of Life everlaſting, through the Merits and Mediation of Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.*

4. Lie no longer in your Bed than is proper and neceſſary for your moderate Refreſhment; nor waſte any part of your precious Time in Idleneſs: But riſe as ſoon as conveniently you can, and put yourſelf in a Poſture for the neceſſary and uſeful Buſineſs of the Day. And as you firſt begin to raiſe yourſelf, ſay theſe, or the like Words: *Lord, as I now ariſe from my Bed in Health of my Body (bleſſed be thy holy Name for it) ſo grant me thy Grace to ſpend my Time here in ſuch a manner, as that at the laſt Day, I may obtain a joyful Reſurrection to everlaſting Life, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.*

5. As you are dreſſing yourſelf, ſay, *Lord, as I cover my Body*

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Body with these Garments, that my Nakedness may not be expos'd to the Eyes of the World; so give me thy Grace, that my Soul may be cloathed with Righteousness, that Sin may not expose me to eternal Shame and Punishment at the last great Day, for Jesus Christ his sake.

6. And if you are putting on any Thing by way of Ornament, say thus: *Lord, if cleansing and adorning my Body would render me as comely and acceptable in thy Sight, as such things commonly do in the Eyes of the World; what Care and Pains would I take, that no Spot, nor any Indecency should appear about me? But, alas! what Trifles are these Things to thee? Poor* Lazarus *was cloathed in Rags, and his Body all loathsome and deform'd with Sores,* Luke xvi. 20. *yet his Soul was beautiful and adorn'd with Piety, and that made him acceptable to thee; when, at the same time, the rich Man, with all his Purple and fine Linnen, was utterly rejected. Whatever sort of Apparel my Body is cloathed with, O let not my Soul want the Wedding-Garment of true Holiness, that I be not for ever cast out from thy Presence, for Jesus Christ his sake.*

7. As soon as you are dress'd, retire yourself to your Closet, if you have one; or else to a Garden, Field, or some private corner of the House. And if you are Master of your own Leisure, or if it be the Lord's Day, that you are free from other Business, spend some Time in reading attentively some part, either of the Holy Scriptures, or of some other good Book, which may help to teach and stir you up to your Duty: And when you have done, address yourself to God in Prayer. For your Direction wherein, there are so many excellent Forms already publish'd in divers Books of Piety and Devotion, that it is needless to set down one here at large. But let your Business here be what it will, and never so urgent, yet do not any Day enter upon it before you have offer'd up your Devotions to Almighty God, at least, in such a short Form as this: *Blessed Lord, I return thee humble and hearty Thanks for all the Mercies and Blessings, both Spiritual and Temporal, which thou hast vouchsafed to me, and to all Men; I acknowledge myself to have been a great Sinner, and therefore to be unworthy of all thy Favours: But,*

Lord,

Lord, give me Grace to repent; and pardon all my Sins, for the ſake of Jeſus Chriſt, who died for the Sins of the whole World. For whoſe ſake alſo, I beſeech thee to give both me and all Men ſuch Things as thou ſeeſt to be neceſſary, both for our Souls and Bodies. Our Father, which art in Heaven, &c. And if the Place into which you are retired be ſecret from the ſight of all Men, offer up your Prayers to God on your Knees: But if it be not, you may Pray as you ſtand, or as you walk, that you may not ſeem to deſire to be *ſeen of Men*, Matth. vi. 5. And if your Heart be truly devout and humble, your Prayer will be accepted, whatever Poſture your Body is in.

8. As for the Lord's Day, let it be your conſtant Care to ſpend it always (as much as human Infirmity will permit) in the Worſhip of God, both publick and private, in reading and hearing his holy Word, and ſuch good Books, or Diſcourſes, as are agreeable thereto; and Works of Charity and Compaſſion to ſuch as are in Diſtreſs, or Poverty; Avoiding not only all Sports and Paſtimes (as they are call'd) but alſo the giving or receiving of any Viſits, except ſuch as Charity and Chriſtianity do oblige you to. And altho' upon ſuch other Days, as by the Church are appointed to be kept holy, we may innocently take a greater Liberty; yet even upon thoſe Days alſo, according as we have Leiſure for it, we ſhould not fail to ſpend ſomewhat more of our Time in Exerciſes of Piety and Religion, than what, it may be, our conſtant Buſineſs will at other Times permit us to do.

9. But my Deſign, at preſent, is chiefly to direct you, how the common and ordinary Days of every Week are to be ſpent. To proceed therefore; As ſoon as you have perform'd your Morning Devotions, then ſet yourſelf to ſome honeſt Buſineſs, whereby you may be the better enabled to do good, both to yourſelf and others; and except your Health do neceſſarily require it, never ſpend a whole Day (or very rarely) in what we call Recreation, and much leſs in downright Idleneſs: Remembring, that at the laſt Day, you will be call'd to a ſtrict Account, how you have ſpent that precious Time which was allow'd you to do good, and

to work out your Salvation. Now the Morning being allow'd by all to be the beſt Time for Buſineſs, beſure that you conſtantly (or generally at leaſt) thus employ it. And if you have no other neceſſary or uſeful Buſineſs to engage you, betake yourſelf to the reading of ſome good Book, whereby you may improve your Underſtanding, and become both wiſer and better. And before you enter upon Buſineſs each Day, put up this ſhort Ejaculation; *Good God, be pleaſed ſo to prevent and direct me by Thy Grace, that I may follow my Calling and worldly Buſineſs honeſtly and uprightly, avoiding all Cheating and Lying, and all manner of Deceit, and ſo endeavouring to make Proviſion for my ſelf and Family here, as that I may not forfeit that eternal Proviſion which Thou haſt made for me in Heaven, thro' Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.*

10. When it is Noon, ſit down to your Meat (except upon ſuch Days as you think it is proper to keep a Faſt) and never forget to crave God's Bleſſing upon your Food before you eat it; nor be aſham'd of ſo good a Practice, however, with many it be grown out of Faſhion. And take ſpecial care that you be not guilty of any Exceſs, either in eating or drinking; but *put a Knife to thy Throat*, that it curb and reſtrain thy Deſires, *if thou be a Man given to* Appetite, *Prov.* xxiii. 2. And when at any time you are to ſit down to a Feaſt, or to ſuch Fare as is better than ordinary, whether it be eating or drinking, at Home or Abroad, beg privately of God to keep you from all Exceſs; uſing this, or the like ſhort Form: *O Lord, teach me, I pray Thee, in the midſt of Plenty to ſtudy and practiſe Temperance, that while I am refreſhing and ſupporting my frail Body, I may not deſtroy my precious and immortal Soul, thro' Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.* And this ſame Practice muſt be repeated in the Evening, if you eat any Supper, or take any Repaſt at that time.

11. When you have done your Meal, give Thanks after Meat; and then privately to yourſelf uſe this, or the like ſhort Ejaculation: *Lord, as Thou haſt been pleaſed to give me Food for the ſuſtaining of my frail Body (for which I moſt humbly thank Thee) ſo be Thou pleaſed to afford me Thy Grace, for the ſtrengthening and confirming my Soul in Piety and Virtue.*

And

And grant that both my Body and Soul may always be dedicated to thee, and employed in thy Service, and to thy Glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

12. Altho' the greatest part of the Afternoon also ought to be spent in some honest Business and Employment, yet such is the Frailty of our Nature, that sometimes it is even necessary that we should a little refresh and divert ourselves with what we commonly call *Recreation*; under which, I also comprehend chearful and innocent Conversation with our Neighbours.

13. Now, when at any Time you are going, for a while, to lay your Business aside, and thus to recreate yourself, lift up your Thoughts before-hand to God, after this manner: *Lord, as thou hast been pleased to allow me to refresh my frail Nature with a little innocent Chearfulness; grant that I may always make use of this Liberty with such Prudence and Caution, as not to forfeit that everlasting Joy which I hope for in the World to come, for Jesus Christ his sake.*

14. Run not hastily upon any sort of Recreation: But first consider whether it be innocent, and then besure you spend not too much Time at it. He who spends that Time in mere Recreation, which may be employ'd in some useful Business, most certainly wastes it.

15. If at any time you recreate yourself, by playing with others, at any sort of Game, besure never to play for so much as to be under any great Concern, whether you win or lose. Where Men play for so much, as to be eagerly concern'd about it, I see no Diversion there can be in it, except it be the Hope they have of winning, from those who play, or bet, with them; which, if it be not coveting that which is our Neighbour's, yet I am sure comes very near it. And on the other side, if a Man loses much, it is apt to betray a Man to Anger and Fretfulness; the Consequences of which are never good, and sometimes prove ill.

16. Endeavour to be always in good Humour; but be upon your Guard whenever you are inclin'd to be cheerful or merry. And tho' sometimes it may be fit to speak hastily, yet watch over yourself, and strive, if you can, neve

to

to be angry. For Mirth, if not carefully curb'd and manag'd, will betray you to Obſcenity and Profaneneſs: And Anger always, more or leſs, diſturbs and hinders the Uſe of ones Reaſon; and makes a Man uncapable, while it laſts, of acting up to the Rules of Decency and Prudence. And in order to the curbing and ſuppreſſing of all extravagant Motions, both of Mirth and Anger, let me recommend this one Rule to you; that is to ſay, That you always, and upon all Occaſions, accuſtom yourſelf to ſpeak in a low Voice. Bring yourſelf but once effectually and conſtantly to this Practice, and you will ſoon find, by Experience, that Mirth and Anger are not ungovernable Things. The Conſequence of which, will be ſuch a ſweet and ſatisfactory Calm in your Mind, as is not eaſily to be conceived by any one that has not had Experience of it.

17. And this puts me in mind of a moſt neceſſary Piece of Advice; in the Obſervation of which, you ought to be daily and hourly careful; namely, to govern your Tongue well, that you may, by the Grace and Aſſiſtance of God, keep yourſelf innocent from that Variety of Sin and Scandal, of which this unruly Member is ſo often the occaſion: And therefore, whenever you are about to join in Company, and mix in Converſation with others, fail not, beforehand, to make this, or the like, ſhort Prayer: *Lord, be thou pleaſed to ſet a Watch upon my Mouth, and to keep the Door of my Lips, that nothing may go out thence, but what is decent and ſober, and every way becoming the Mouth of a Chriſtian, and one who expects to be called to Account for every idle Word, at the great and dreadful Day of Judgment.* And accordingly, upon all Occaſions, let your Diſcourſe be, *Firſt*, True and ſincere, and free from all Lying and Equivocation; *Secondly*, Mild and charitable, avoiding all unneceſſary, or bitter, Reflections upon others, (whoſe Faults you ought rather to conceal than expoſe) and all reviling and opprobrious Names, or Expreſſions; which ought not be given, or uſed, to the pooreſt Servant, or Underling, *Matth.* v. 22. for whom Chriſt died, as much as for the greateſt Men. And, *Laſtly*, Let your Diſcourſe always be agreeable to the

Rules

Rules of Piety, avoiding all profane, and ſmutty Jeſts, all manner of Oaths or Curſes, or evil Wiſhes; and all mention of God and Chriſt, except it be with due Honour and Reverence to the Divine Majeſty.

18. Relieving the Poor, and giving of Alms, is a Duty more often and earneſtly preſt, perhaps than any other throughout the holy Scripture. Every day then, or at leaſt every week, beſure you fail not to lay aſide ſomething for charitable Uſes, in a ſufficient Proportion to the worldly Subſtance that God has bleſt you with. And think often with your ſelf after this manner: *God has been pleaſed ſo to bleſs my Labour and Induſtry, that I have gained ſo much, or ſo much, this Week or this Month: Or God has provided for me by his good Providence, that I have ſo much a Year coming in to me. Now how much of this ought I to return in Works of Charity, to my good God, to whom I am entirely beholden for the Whole! O let me not be niggardly to the Poor, conſidering, that what is given to them, is lent to the Lord,* Prov. 19, 17. *and accepted of by Chriſt, as if it had been beſtowed upon himſelf,* Mat. 25. 40. And when you have thus ſet apart what you deſign for Charity, be careful to diſtribute it (not to every idle or vagrant Beggar, but) to ſuch as you can find to be the trueſt Objects of Pity and Compaſſion.

19. Whatever Buſineſs you have at any time been doing, whatever Recreation you have been taking, or whatever Company you have been in; as ſoon as you have done, immediately look back, recollect the ſeveral Circumſtances of what is paſt; and ſeriouſly conſider whether or no you have misbehaved your ſelf in any particular Inſtance; and if you have, then beg God's Pardon, and reſolve a-new, to be more careful hereafter upon the like Occaſion.

And always in the Evening, before you betake yourſelf to Sleep, beſure in like Manner to look back upon the Tranſactions of the whole Day, giving God ſtill the Glory of what you have done well, and craving his Forgiveneſs for what you have done amiſs; together with his Grace and Aſſiſtance that you may do better for the Time to come.

And altho' ſometimes in a Morning, Buſineſs may ſo ſurprize you, as not to give you much Time for your Devotion, yet at Night you may ſurely borrow a little Time, even from your Sleep, to be beſtowed in Private upon the Service of Almighty God: For the Manner of doing which, I again refer you to ſome of thoſe excellent Books of Piety and Devotion, of which I have made mention, *Sect.* 7. But if your Buſineſs keeps you up never ſo late, or however tir'd you may be with the Labour of the Day, yet never ſettle yourſelf to ſleep, without ſeriouſly and devoutly ſaying ſome ſuch ſhort Prayer as that which I have there directed for the Morning; and then conclude with that ſame Prayer and Ejaculation, which I have ſet down, *Sect.* 7. at the beginning of theſe Directions.

F I N I S.

☞ Courteous Reader, *When you have Read this ſmall Book, and think it not worthy of one Penny, when peruſed, keep it Clean, and return it in three Hours. Thoſe who are diſpoſed to buy any Quantities, may have them at 6 s. the Hundred.*

Printed for *William Richards.*

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